

Cioppino, a flavorful fish stew, is closely identified with San Francisco. It's believed to have been brought to the city by the bay by early Italian fishermen who emigrated there from Genoa. In place of the Mediterranean fish used in the original dish, it uses local favorites like Dungeness crab and rockfish, plus shrimp and mussels. If you can, use whole crab in the shell; the shell adds flavor. The tomato and red wine stock can be made ahead. Remember to add the various fish and shellfish separately so that you can control their cooking time. Be aware of not overcooking the fish as it continues to cook while sitting in the broth. Hog Island does a variation on this called rustic seafood stew, their version of cioppino, which is one of their staple menu items. Serve with crusty bread and a big glass of the red wine used to make the stew.

CIOPPINO

¼ cup (60 ml) olive oil

3 cups (330 g) chopped onions

1 cup (140 g) chopped peeled carrot

⅔ cup (65 g) chopped celery or fennel

3 tablespoons chopped garlic

3 cups (495 g) canned whole or diced peeled tomatoes with their juice

6 cups (1.4 l) fish stock (page 332) or chicken stock (page 333)

2½ cups (600 ml) hearty red wine, such as zinfandel, cabernet, or sangiovese

3 large bay leaves

¼ cup (10 g) chopped fresh basil

1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano

2 teaspoons fennel seeds

½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 whole Dungeness crab (about 2 pounds/910 g), cleaned and chopped into sections

1½ pounds (680 g) mussels (18 to 24), scrubbed and debearded (page 33)

2 pounds (910 g) rockfish fillets, cut into 1-inch (2.5-cm) cubes

16 medium shrimp (31 to 35 count), peeled and deveined (page 115), shells reserved

8 thick slices sourdough bread, brushed with garlic-infused olive oil and toasted

¼ cup (13 g) chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

In a large pot, heat the olive oil over medium heat and add the onions, carrot, celery, and garlic. Sauté until the vegetables are lightly browned. Add the tomatoes, stock, wine, bay leaves, basil, oregano, fennel seeds, and crushed red pepper. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to a simmer and cook, partially covered, for 15 to 20 minutes.

Drain in a fine-mesh sieve over a bowl. Discard the solids and return the broth to the pot. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside to use now, or let cool, cover, and refrigerate for up to 5 days.

To finish the cioppino, add the crab and mussels to the broth and cook over medium heat until the mussels open, about 5 minutes. Add the fish and shrimp and cook until the fish is opaque. Look through and discard any mussels that have not opened. Place a sourdough toast in the bottom of each of 8 large, deep bowls and ladle the stew on top. Sprinkle with parsley and serve immediately. **SERVES 8**

